STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Indo-us Civil Nuclear Co-operation

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): Sir, I rise to share with this august House recent developments pertaining to the implementation of the understanding between India and the United States on the resumption of civilian nuclear energy co-operation. A reconciled Bill for this purpose was passed by the US House of Representatives and the Senate on 8/9th December, 2006.

This nuclear understanding with the USA is significant from the larger perspective of our energy security. Energy has become a critical constraint to expanding our economic growth and development. We have to expand our generating capacity in every form of energy. Presently, nuclear energy provides less than three per cent of our energy mix. Our current estimates envisage nuclear power generation of 30,000 MWe by 2022 and 63,000 MWe by 2032. The absence of international co-operation seriously constraints us from reaching these nuclear energy targets. India is today seriously pursuing several energy options including clean coal technologies, exploitation of coal bed methane and gas hydrates, wind as well as solar power. India can today expand its access to other forms of energy, relying on market mechanisms to do so. Our access to nuclear energy is impeded by an international regime and requires a political solution consistent with our national security and energy requirements.

The US Administration committed in the July 18 Joint Statement to adjust its laws that otherwise prohibited civil nuclear energy co-operation with India. Although the passage of any legislation is an internal matter of that country on which we would not otherwise comment, this legislation is an enabling measure necessary for civil nuclear energy co-operation to be worked out between India and the United States. Keeping that in mind, the enactment of waivers from certain provisions of the US atomic Energy Act, which allows the US to co-operate with India in civilian nuclear energy despite our not accepting full scope safeguards and despite maintaining a strategic programme, is significant. We recognise the initiative that President Bush has taken to make these exceptions for India possible We also note the bipartisan support that this initiative has garnered in the US Congress.

The legislation, that has been passed, is an enabling measure that will now allows US negotiators to discuss and conclude with India a bilateral co-operation agreement, which is popularly known as 123 Agreement.

Such an agreement is a pre-requisite for nuclear co-operation and trade with the United States. In parallel, we are engaging the International Atomic Energy agency with the intention of negotiating and concluding an India-specific Safeguards agreement and an Additional Protocol. Act a broader level, we have already been discussing with member States of the Nuclear Suppliers' Group (NSG) the need for an adjustment of their guidelines to permit transfers to India. We have briefed them collectively on various issues of mutual interest and look forward to their taking a decision on the adjustment of NSG guidelines at an appropriate time. We should bear in mind that while every stage of this process is important, the test of this process is for India to secure full civil nuclear co-operation with the international community while protecting our strategic programme and mainting the integrity of our three-stage nuclear programme and indigenous research and development.

I would like to inform the House that the US Administration has categorically accured us that this legislation enables the United States to fulfil all of the commitments it made to India in the July 18 and March 2 Joint Statements and that this legislation explicitly authorises civil nuclear co-operation with India in a manner fully consistent with those two Statements. We fully expect the July 18 Statement and the March 2 Separation Plan to be reflected in the text of the 123 Agreement.

In regard to the principles and concerns that guide our approach to the nuclear understanding, the Prime Minister had set forth the Government's position when he spoke to Parliament on August 17,2006. These principles and concerns continue to remain the basis for our engagement with the United States and the international community on the tasks ahead. I would also like to share with the House that the Government has taken note of certain extraneous and prescriptive provisions in the legislation. We have always maintained that the conduct of foreign policy determined solely by our national interests is our sovereign right. We have also been clear that our strategic programme remains outside the purview of these discussions. We will not allow external scrutiny of or interference with the strategic programme.

Eventually, our objective is that technology denial regimes that have targeted India for so many decades must be dismantled to that our national development is unimpeded. We are also committed to creating a climate where our scientists and technologists can participate in and contribute to international initiatives in various fields. We have taken a big step towards

that goal and i am sure that this House would continue to support us in that endeavour. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY(West Bengal): Sir, will we now have clarifications on it?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We will have it later on.

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA (Jharkhand): We will have a full discussion on it.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will we have a full discussion in this Session only?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:The BAC will decide that. It will be meeting day-after-tomorrow.

MESSAGE FROM LOK SABHA

SECRETARY-GENERAL: Sir, I have to report to the House the following message received from the Lok Sabha, signed by the Secretary-General of the Lok Sabha.

> "I am directed to inform you that Lok Sabha, at its sitting held on Tuesday, the 12th December, 2006, adopted the following motion regarding extension of time for presentation of the Report of the Joint Committee to examine the constitutional and legal position relating to office of profit:—
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> **MOTION**
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> "That this House do extend up to first day of the last week of Budget Session, 2007, the time for presentation of the report of the Joint Committee to examine the constitutional and legal position relating to office of profit."

Sir, I lay a copy on the Table.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The House stands adjourned to meet tomorrow at 11.00 A.M.

The House then adjourned at thirty-three minutes past five of the clock till eleven of the clock on Wednesday, the 13th December, 2006.